

Multimedia Research and Documentation of Oral Genres in Africa: *Managing the Challenges of Digitalization*

Peter Wasamba, University of Nairobi

Abstract

How do we deal with oral genres in a world where new technologies have become available to more and more people? (Merolla Daniela vii). Oral genres in Africa are alive and dynamic. Technology too, is not at a standstill. It is changing rapidly and altering the way verbal art is composed, performed, documented and conveyed to a wider audience. For various reasons, Africa is lagging behind in multimedia research and documentation of oral genres. The lack of proportionate presence of African oral genres in the global digital map is caused by, among other factors, the slow pace of adoption of multimedia research and documentation. This paper, therefore, examines how the new communications technologies, in particular the computer-mediated communication (CMC), impact on research and documentation of African oral literature in the digital age. Specifically, the paper examines the extent to which multimedia research and documentation of oral genres in Africa are influenced by digital technology. The paper discusses the value of multimedia research and documentation of oral genres in Africa in digital era, the potential challenges that digitalization of research is likely to encounter and how best the challenges can be managed. The paper calls for a deliberate approach to the employment of digitalized multimedia research and documentation in Africa because being digital is unstoppable.

Key Words: Africa, oral genres, multimedia research, documentation, challenges

A paper presented at the conference on Multimedia Research and Documentation of African Oral Genres: Connecting Diasporas and Local Audiences

Mohammed V University - Agdal, Rabat, Morocco

13-14 December 2013,